

# Highlands Historical Society

Summer 2017

To preserve and promote the rich heritage of Highlands

Highlands, N. C.

## THE ELIZABETH WRIGHT PRINCE HOUSE— ELEVATED TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER

The Elizabeth Wright Prince House has been placed on the National Register. The National Register is an official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation, and within its precise guidelines the Prince House qualifies as historically significant with regard to local, state, and national history.

Built in 1877, two years after the founding of the town, the Prince House is the oldest house in Highlands. Its builder, Arthur House, came from Connecticut and constructed the town's first sawmill, after which Mill Creek is named.

Frank Boynton lived in this house when he led Charles Sprague Sargent to their famed re-discovery of *Shortia galacifolia*, the extremely rare plant that André Michaux had first discovered and was lost for a hundred years.

Another owner of the house was Rev. Robert Mickle, third pastor of the Presbyterian Church, who extolled Highlands characteristically as "nature's sanatorium without a barroom in the town or vicinity."

Miss Alicia Trapier from Charleston, S.C., who helped spearhead the building of the Episcopal Church and personally provided the bell that still rings from its belfry, summered in this house. She rented it to Billy and Mattie Potts, their seven children, and Billy's parents, when they first came to Highlands. Billy and Mattie were progenitors of all the Potts living in Highlands today.

Frank and Annie Wright owned the home until Frank's death, when his brother Jim Wright acquired it, and his sister, Elizabeth "Lizzie" Wright Prince, ran it as a boarding house. She added a second story in the

rear for boarders, rented her rooms for \$9.00 a week, and provided lodging during the off-season for the Reese family, which had helped enlarge the house.

She supplemented her income from room and board by serving Sunday dinners to the public. Her meals became legendary, making "The Prince House," as it became popularly known, a Mecca for residents and visitors to the community who dined there on Sundays for the next forty years.

Lawrence Wood recalled, "She cooked all her food the oldtime way, no mixes or instant foods were found in her kitchen. She was well known for her pumpkin pies and oldfashioned chocolate cakes—these being yellow layers with chocolate icing. The table was covered with the oldfashioned white tablecloth."

When Elizabeth's health failed and she moved to Aiken, S.C., her son Ephraim inherited the home, visiting it only occasionally with his wife, Ruby Crow. For twenty years it sat empty and in dire need of repair until, in the bimillennial year of 2000, it became home to the newly reactivated Highlands Historical Society, which has

devoted more than a decade to restoring it as a living history museum for the people of Highlands.

Credit for restoration of the Prince House belongs to the extraordinary generous members of the Historical Society, its Board of Directors over the past fourteen years, and grants from the Town of Highlands and such nonprofits as Mountain Findings, Cullasaja Women's Outreach, Laurel Garden Club, and Mountain Garden Club. The Historical Society is both honored and grateful for their help.D



*The Elizabeth Wright Prince House*

**President’s Message  
Highlands Historical Society  
May 2017**

Fourteen years ago, having the Prince House listed on the National Historic Register was no more than a “twinkle in his eye”! Fast forward to January this year, Ran Shaffner notified the board that his dream had come true.

Ran has pursued this dream with so much passion and determination but, perhaps more importantly, with so much love.

For those of you who might not know Dr. Randolph Shaffner, he is an iconic figure on the Highlands scene, beginning with his ownership of the book store, Cyrano’s, and author of the widely acclaimed, *Heart of the Blue Ridge*, to establishing himself as a highly regarded archivist, ready and so willing to assist folks in learning more about the history of our wonderful plateau.

What we, as a board, have learned about getting a property on this enviable list is that it involves a long and demanding process. There were so many requirements that had to be met regarding historical integrity right down to the smallest detail such as original window latches and panes. There cannot have been major renovations or additions, and considering the multiple ownerships of the house, it is amazing that Ran was able to document each of the items under consideration to the satisfaction of the appropriate committees and departments.

For sure, there will be much more written and celebrated about this “historic” Highlands event as we approach the summer.

In closing, the Highlands Historical Society considers it an honor to have the Prince House take its place alongside the other properties in town with such a distinguished designation. Thank you, Ran!

Regards,

Osborne Oakley

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**RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP?**

We hope you will renew now.

Family \$50 • Individual \$35 • Sustainer \$100  
Business \$250 • Promoter \$500 • Preserver \$1,000  
Protector \$2,500 • Highlander \$5,000

And we hope you will add a donation, as many of you have done so generously in the past.

To join or renew membership by check or credit card, visit [highlandshistory@netv.com](mailto:highlandshistory@netv.com).

Highlands Historical Society

P. O. Box 670, Highlands, NC 28741-0670

**Farewell to Our Associate Archivist Sue Potts**

On April 5th the Highlands Historical Society lost one of its most dedicated and valuable supporters. Sue Potts was as much a part of Highlands history as she was an advocate for it. She lived it as a member of the local Baty, Hopper, McClure, and Potts families. She taught it to her students at Highlands School. She promoted it by her service as a founding member and officer of the reactivated Historical Society. She wrote it in her contributions to the historical scripts for Walk in the Park. She portrayed it in her speeches to the town’s civic organizations. She demonstrated its time-honored traditions to the Kelsey Kids. And she helped preserve its treasures in the Historical Society’s Archives, Museum, and Prince House.

We will miss her intense devotion, intellectual acumen, keen sense of humor, honest insight, and generosity of heart, spirit, and love. Sue Potts will be long-cherished as dear and irreplaceable.





## HHS Complex Decorated Christmas 2016

Thanks to Mary Ann Hardman, who bought the wreaths, ornaments, and garland. Linda David made the bows. Pat Griffin also helped.

## KELSEY KIDS CAMP – JUNE 12-16

This is a free one-week Day Camp for children (8-11 years) learning and experiencing Highlands's early history and life in the 19th and 20th century. The days are Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Each day begins and ends at the Highlands Historical Museum. There will be activities at the museum and outings that involve group travel and hiking. We ask that each child attend all five (5) days, excluding emergencies or illness. Applications may be found on the Historical Society website at [www.highlandshistory.com](http://www.highlandshistory.com) (under the tab "Event Calendar") or may be picked up at the Museum on Friday or Saturday. They should be mailed to Linda David, P. O. Box 2409, Highlands, NC 28741, or emailed to [lindawd@hcgexpress.net](mailto:lindawd@hcgexpress.net). Questions? Please call Linda at 828-526-3374.



Front row (L to R): Jacob Knight, Abby Vanderwiele, Jessica Thompson, Chloe Billingsley; 2nd row: A. J. Sellino, Aniah McKim, Jaylin Raby, Katie Earp, Olivia Thompson; 3rd row: Cambridge Collany, James Earp, Gavin Knight; 4th row: Nathan Thompson, Caspian Collany, Sandie Travathan, and Linda David.

## The Vittles of Summer 2017 Festival

Date	Event	Location
July 2	“Big Hats, Flapjacks, & Bloody Marys”	Kettle Rock
July 13	“Tapas & Moonshine”	Highlands Wine Shoppe
August 1	Party at Old Howell Barn	Home of Frances and Obie Oakley
August 8	“Appalachian Dinner”	The Inn At Half Mile Farm
September 14	“Denim and Dulcimers” (Dahlia Patron Party)	Highlands Historical Society
September 14-16	Dahlia Festival Weekend/Plaque Dedication: Prince House	Rec Park/Highlands Historical Society

It’s true the Highlands Historical Society’s annual Dahlia Festival is not until September, but it’s not too early to think about entering. Not a gardener? You can support the society by attending any number of exciting events prior to the flower show itself.

This year’s patron party, Denim and Dulcimers, will be held on the campus of HHS September 14, but there will be lively parties all summer long ending with the Dahlia Festival Weekend and the show, September 14 through 16.

Committee Chair Judy Taylor says, “The Vittles of Summer 2017 Festival offers five opportunities to support the society, beginning in July. All of these festivities are being held at historic sites, and most will have a representative from the Highlands Historical Society to interpret the connection to our community.” Taylor encourages everyone to attend. “We hope these events will attract many of our locals as well as seasonal residents. We’ll offer good food, fine libations, and many stories about our town’s history that you may not know . . . wars, ghosts, and much more!”

“Big Hats, Flapjacks & Bloody Marys” will be held on Kettle Rock with dialogue about Annie Lynn Sullivan, who used to host the same Sunday Brunches many years ago.

Another gathering, “Tapas & Moonshine,” will be held at Highlands Wine Shoppe (formerly MountainTop Wine Shoppe) with stories about Highlands’s Moccasin War, which is featured in historian Ran Shaffner’s book, *Heart of the Blue Ridge*.

A quaint 80-year-old stone barn is the setting for a Highlands pulled pork BBQ dinner complete with all the fixin’s and full array of beverages on Tuesday, August 1st, at the Highlands Country Club home of Frances and Obie Oakley, Highlands Historical Society’s 2017 president.

Watch for more details on our website ([www.highlandshistory.com](http://www.highlandshistory.com)). For more information and how you might attend the festival and enter your prize-winning dahlia, email the Highlands Historical Society at [highlandshistory@nctv.com](mailto:highlandshistory@nctv.com) or leave a message at (828) 787-1050.